



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MISSOURI  
ERIC SCHMITT

August 29, 2019

BY HAND-DELIVERY

State Auditor Nicole Galloway  
State Capitol, Room 121  
P.O. Box 869  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Dear Auditor Galloway,

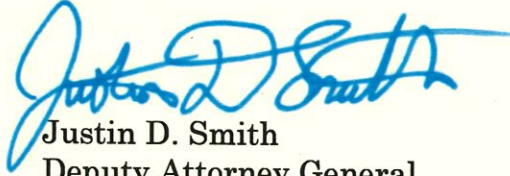
This letter is in response to your request for this Office's views on a Sunshine Law issue. We received a similar request from another statewide official, and we have enclosed our response for your reference.

You asked our Office the following question: "Should a Missouri government entity, such as the State Auditor's Office, assert that the First Amendment of the US Constitution provides an exception to the Sunshine Law such that it can redact, any or possibly all, identifying information related to an individual who is conducting or seeking to conduct business before the entity, advocating on behalf of a third party or lobbying that entity, or otherwise attempting to influence or advise on any action taken by the government entity?"

Without addressing whether this is a proper opinion request or whether the State Auditor may request a legal opinion for actions taken by a different governmental office, we recommend that the State Auditor's Office not rely on the First Amendment for blanket redactions of personal contact information. The reasoning for this advice is set forth in the enclosed letter.

With this letter, we are closing your request to our Office. Please note that this letter does not constitute an official legal opinion of the Missouri Attorney General. This letter addresses only whether blanket redaction of personal contact information is appropriate under the First Amendment and § 610.021(14), and does not address any other Sunshine Law exception that may apply to individual records.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justin D. Smith", written in a cursive style.

Justin D. Smith  
Deputy Attorney General  
for Special Litigation

Enclosure